

and European democracies are some of our most important. It is important we work together, try to understand each other, and communicate—not only on a political but on a personal level—through our citizens.

For nearly 40 years, a cultural and political exchange has occurred between the United States and Germany through young members of society. In fact, my office is currently participating.

Maja Sondermann is a 21-year-old from a town close to Frankfurt, Germany, a young professional and student studying marketing and advertisement and currently interning for my office. She is a participant in the 39th year of the Congress-Bundestag Youth Exchange, CBYX, a program jointly funded by the U.S. Congress and the German Bundestag, and one of five CBYX participants currently interning on the Hill.

Initiated in 1983, the Congress-Bundestag Youth Exchange offers young Americans and Germans the opportunity to explore each other's culture. This cultural exchange program involves participants moving to the U.S. or Germany for 1 year and strengthens the ties of our American-German relationship through citizen diplomacy.

Over 26,000 American and German high school students, vocational students, and young professionals have thus far participated in and benefited from this incredible experience.

Even through the pandemic the participants remained resilient and joined the cultural exchange virtually. This year, the CBYX was able to return to an in-person exchange in August of 2021. For the duration of the program, the participants live with host families, immersing themselves in the daily life of a different culture, and attend classes, and the young professionals even work in the foreign country. They form bonds and friendships with people whom they meet during the year abroad and learn about a different culture while fully immersing in it and building strong personal and professional connections.

The participants on both sides gain a new perspective on global affairs, politics, and socioeconomic topics, as well as a new sense of empowerment, independence, and knowledge of a different culture and what it means to be a global citizen.

Their contribution to cultural exchange and the American-German friendship doesn't end with their flight back home. These young minds are positively impacted through this experience, as they share it with others after returning to their home countries.

Even beyond that, the participants stay connected with the people they meet and other participants. Many alumni of the program continue to contribute to transatlantic relations on both sides through the alumni network and their personal career paths.

With the upcoming 40th anniversary of the Congress-Bundestag Youth Ex-

change in 2023, and as a member of the German-American Caucus, I want to draw attention to this important program. It continues to support both our nations' transatlantic bonds while also inspiring so many young minds to engage in a cultural and political exchange.

Madam Speaker, the CBYX program is an exceptional chance for our countries to connect and communicate on a different level and form relationships that will last and positively impact our future since the program directly impacts the foundation of our future young citizens.

#### OUR NATION'S FENTANYL CRISIS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. MEUSER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. MEUSER. Madam Speaker, there is a fentanyl crisis in our country. It is plaguing our communities. It is plaguing my district, poisoning our children, and devastating American families.

Madam Speaker, it seems to be ignored by many, however, both in the White House and on this House floor. Our southern border is an unmitigated disaster due to this administration's open border policies. Drugs, crime, and the secret transportation of illegal immigrants flooding into our communities without warning in the middle of the night is causing serious, long-term damage. Yet, it seems to be ignored by too many.

Fentanyl is an extremely deadly substance. It has flowed into our country in droves by way of the southern border. A recent study found that fentanyl deaths have doubled in 30 States amid the border crisis. Americans are suffering at the hands of the drug cartels.

Customs and Border Patrol reported a 134 percent increase in fentanyl seizures in fiscal year 2021 with a disturbing 11,201 pounds confiscated, which is estimated to be able to kill every American seven times over. This is devastating and unbelievable.

With this high amount confiscated, the Drug Enforcement Agency was forced to put out a Public Safety Alert, warning the American people about fake pills laced with fentanyl and other fentanyl-related poisons putting so many at risk.

Drug overdoses have hit a record high in 2021 at over 100,000 deaths in the United States including more than 5,000 deaths in Pennsylvania. Nearly two-thirds of these deaths were connected to fentanyl.

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In 2021, the leading cause of deaths for Americans between the ages of 18 and 45 were drug overdoses. Is there any question that Congress should act? Madam Speaker, I am a cosponsor of the HALT Fentanyl Act. This legislation will permanently schedule fentanyl substances as a schedule I drug, giving law enforcement the abil-

ity to prosecute the trafficking of deadly fentanyl into American communities.

My Democrat colleagues recently blocked this lifesaving legislation when my Republican colleagues offered it for consideration last week. It truly is hard to understand why President Biden and far too many of our Democrat colleagues, in fact, all last week, have ignored this crisis, blocked legislation that would help fight it, and have sat idly by as they contemplate what the root causes of our southern border crisis might be.

Madam Speaker, if someone can show me where we have seen the White House actually mention fentanyl as the terrible scourge on our country, I would like to see it. If, however, they were to take a mirror to their own policies, they might realize that the root cause is the policies themselves. It is certainly time for Congress to act, to step up and do its job together to stop the flow of fentanyl into our communities.

#### BIDEN POLICIES HAVE ADVERSE EFFECT ON SMALL BUSINESSES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. FITZGERALD) for 5 minutes.

Mr. FITZGERALD. Madam Speaker, I wanted to shine some light on a topic that many Wisconsinites and Americans may not really be tracking very closely. After over a year under President Biden and his administration, it is clear that the policies are having an adverse effect on small business. It is raising the price of goods, which people can see right now when they go to market, when they purchase gas, and it is slowing the economy.

While my colleagues across the aisle have been really, I think, unable to enact an agenda that would combat this, the Biden administration's unaccountable and unelected bureaucrats are trying their hardest to expand and enact these reckless policies. That is what I wanted to touch on today.

President Biden's executive orders, of which he signed many right after being sworn in as President, have had an adverse effect on competition. They consolidate sweeping government power over things like agriculture, which is near and dear to my own State of Wisconsin; the airlines; the banking industry; broadband; health and healthcare products; meat packers, which we are all well aware of; and the technology industry.

It is a broad scope of items that are affected. However, robust enforcement of the antitrust laws could provide substantial benefit to consumers because that would help ensure that the markets are competitive, particularly from predatory actions as we have seen specific to Big Tech.

However, it is clear that the administration's actions are not narrowly targeted at Big Tech where it may be considered appropriate. But they are part